

Meeting Date: January 12, 2007

Agenda Item No. 19

Agenda Item:

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

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Background:

Due to a variety of factors, Yellowstone cutthroat trout have declined across their historic range in the western United States. In Idaho, Yellowstone cutthroat trout occupy 61% of their historical range. The Fisheries Bureau has prepared a Draft Management Plan for the Conservation of Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in Idaho. This draft plan summarizes historical and current information on Yellowstone cutthroat trout throughout its range in Idaho. The draft plan describes their status with respect to abundance, trends, genetics, and an evaluation of land and water management effects on the subspecies. We present management strategies and conservation actions to increase the persistence of Yellowstone cutthroat trout across Idaho. Previously, the Commission was briefed on the population status of Yellowstone cutthroat trout in Idaho based on a statewide survey conducted by the Department from 1999-2003. This presentation will provide an overview of the management strategies and conservation actions we propose to increase the persistence of Yellowstone cutthroat trout. The Fisheries Bureau seeks approval from the Commission to solicit public review of this draft plan.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

The Draft Management Plan for the Conservation of Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in Idaho describes how the Department intends to manage and conserve this important game fish as per its mission found in Idaho Code Section 36-103. The Department's strategic plan has a goal to "Improve public understanding of and involvement in fish and wildlife management." This draft plan sets management direction and goals for conservation. The Commission sets policy and provides direction, considers input from the public, and has the authority to adopt, amend, or reject Department-recommended plans. The Fisheries Bureau intends to seek Commission approval of the Yellowstone cutthroat trout management plan in 2007. Prior to taking any action on the merits of this management plan, public review and comment is necessary.

Public Involvement Process:

To date, there has been no public involvement in developing this draft plan. Our intent is to seek Commission approval for a 60-day public review period. Following this public comment period, the Fisheries Bureau will analyze and summarize results for the Commission for future action on this management plan for Yellowstone cutthroat trout.

Staff Recommendation:

The Fisheries Bureau seeks Commission approval to provide for a 60-day public comment period on our Draft Management Plan for Conservation of Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in Idaho.

Justification: